



NLG NEWSLETTER

Official Publication of the Numismatic Literary Guild Inc.

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Winter 1996

A FLURRY OF ACTIVITY

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK...By David T. Alexander

The NLG and I have often done our best work together during blizzards. The great 25-year history was compiled during the Blizzard of '93, and here we sit in the midst of the hair-raising Blizzard of '96. The boys and girls on the telly are now saying that the present blitz (almost 24 hours old as I type this message) is the worst winter assault in the history of New York.

I expect they're right. "Worse than 1947," we keep hearing, and as a survivor of '47 I guess I have to agree. I was 7 back then, in third grade at St. Gregory the Great in Brooklyn in the only year we lived in the city after 1942.

The drifts then and now recall the cartoon of a tall father plowing through the white stuff, boasting to his tiny son, "Gee, Billy, when I was your age we had snow up to HERE!" Looking down, he then sees his young son struggling through snow up to his

sturdy shoulders, literally "up to HERE!"

NLG is alive and well nonetheless, as Treasurer Kay Lenker tells us from sunny California. Our basic mission and challenges are the same as they were in 1968: to serve the writing fraternity to the best of our ability with the few volunteers on hand.

In this snowy new year as in the past, we need suitable articles to give life to the NLG Newsletter. Blank pages won't do it, and your officers are all exceptionally busy people. For this reason, we especially welcome input from new members.

The outlook for the new year 1996 is exceptionally cheerful for NLG and its constituents. Reading over the list of new members will give Guild members an idea of the caliber of applicants we are receiving these days. To all of these, we again say WELCOME!

Challenges and opportunities for numismatic periodicals will be many in '96. Just look at the physical "downsizing" of Coin World, Numismatic News, World Coin News and Bank Note Reporter to see how old-fashioned Yankee ingenuity is tackling the critical newsprint shortage.

Though ad revenue levels are distressing to magazine publishers, COINage and Coins are going ahead undaunted. High-quality numismatic books are appearing at a record pace, and the outlook for competent writers in all these areas is bright.

Club publications are looking up. Some of the most significant are robust with health under new editors, notably the C-4 Newsletter of the Colonial Coin Collectors Club and The Asylum of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society.

Cont. on page 6



FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

By Ed Reiter

Southern California seems very far away as I sit to compose this message in chilly northern New Jersey, halfway through a cold and snowy winter. But the glow still lingers from the NLG Bash at the Anaheim Hilton Hotel.

It's hard to believe that half a year has passed since that pleasant summer evening, but time does fly when you're having fun — or working around the clock!

It occurs to me that the NLG has much in common with baseball: The pace of our activity quickens in the spring, crests in the summer and slows to a crawl in the winter. And when things get slow in the dead of winter, we turn — like hot-stove leaguers — to the memories we've preserved from the previous summer.

The Anaheim Bash provided us with many enduring memories. One that remains especially bright for me is the memory of Lee Martin, the founder of the Guild, standing before our group for the first time in more

than a decade to offer reminiscences and insights as well as surprise gifts for some of his longtime NLG friends and colleagues.

Characteristically, Lee was looking forward as well as back, as he demonstrated dramatically by summoning Eric Li Cheung, the Guild's youngest member, to join him on the stage. The moment had an aura of history about it, as if we were witnessing our past and our future personified before us side by side. Eric, who was just 11 years old at the time, is emerging already as one of the hobby's outstanding young numismatists and holds promise of becoming one of our greatest 21st-century leaders.

In recognition of Lee's long service to the Guild, we turned the tables and put him on the receiving end of two gifts: a 25th-anniversary NLG medal and a copy of the history booklet we published at that time, in 1993. Similar presentations were made to another distinguished guest, Miriam Bailey, whose late husband Clem gave NLG members countless laughs with his wry sense of humor — and also gave his name to our most prestigious award, the coveted Clemy, as well as the Clement F. Bailey Memorial Award for new writers.

The 1995 Clemy presentation is yet another freeze-frame in my mental highlight film of the Anaheim Bash. Unfortunately,

the 1994 winner, Elvira Clain-Stefanelli, was unable to be with us to bestow the award in person; she had suffered a nasty fall and broken her hip. But she did provide a first-rate surrogate — the Guild's First Lady, Margo Russell — and Margo got to read Elvira's engrossing remarks explaining how she arrived at her selection.

The choice of the presenter proved to be just as apt as the Clemy selection itself — for the winner was Margo's successor

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as Coin World editor, Beth Deisher. As I listened to Beth's gracious and eloquent words of acceptance, I became aware again that while the Clemy brings honor to its recipients, the high caliber of the recipients also makes the award itself more meaningful.

Dozens of other awards preceded the Clemy, as the Guild gave recognition to exceptional achievements in a broad spectrum of categories. And once again our contest coordinator, Scott Travers, had handsome award plaques ready and waiting for all. I continue to marvel at Scott's incredible feat in getting the entries judged each year, and the plaques engraved and shipped, within such a narrow time frame. We're fortunate indeed to have his remarkable talents available to us.

One very special award originated not with the Guild, but with Krause Publications, which chose this occasion to present its prestigious Numismatic Ambassador Award to our own David T. Alexander. I'm pleased and proud that Dave's long service was recognized in this fashion — for much of that service, of course, has been rendered in the cause of the NLG. It would take the better part of this page to list his contributions in detail, but two of the most conspicuous were his eight-year tenure as executive director and his authorship of our superb 50-page history booklet. He remains as active as ever

even now, as a member of our Board of Directors and editor of the NLG Newsletter.

The Ambassador presentation was made by Cliff Mishler, who is himself a longtime NLG loyalist. The ceremony united two past Clemy winners, for Cliff and Dave both have received our top honor.

As always, the serious moments were preceded by plenty of levity, NLG-style, with Wendell Wolka serving again as our genial emcee, ringmaster and tour guide to the numismatic equivalent of Fantasyland. Wendell got the show on the road with some needle-sharp jabs at the usual suspects, including the ANA and the U.S. Mint. His retinue of camp followers continued to give new meaning to the word "shilling." As I've observed before, Wendell really doesn't need a safety net of shills, but by now they're as much a part of his act as the candelabrum was to Liberace's!

Scott Travers and Q. David Bowers appeared in their familiar Karnak-style routine, with Dave divining answers to questions hermetically sealed in envelopes eagerly fed to him by Scott.

"Screw press" was one of the answers. The accompanying question: What does the United States Mint use to strike its new commemorative coins?

"Error coins" was another of the answers. The question:

How would you describe virtually all of the new commemorative coins authorized by Congress in the last five years?

Tom DeLorey delighted the assemblage with his highly distinctive rendering of a parody he crafted to the tune of Bob Hope's theme song, "Thanks for the Memory." His target was a popular one: the insatiable California tax authorities, who sought to nickel-and-dime convention-goers to death. The lyrics are published elsewhere in this newsletter.

My own song "tribute" was a paean to the newly elected members of the ANA Board of Governors. Set to the tune of "California, Here I Come," it expressed the new governors' glee at the prospect of the generous perks they would be enjoying from ANA Central in Colorado Springs. The reworked title, naturally enough, was "Colorado, Here I Come."

Stealing the show, however, was Chris Connell's performance of his own original "Ode to a Coin Show Junkie." The audience clearly loved the song, which Chris delivered dramatically in a voice no doubt honed by hundreds of Sunday homilies, accompanying himself on the guitar. We hope to print the lyrics in an upcoming NLG Newsletter.

Yet another New Jerseyan, Greg Heim, courageously reappeared at the NLG microphone, bringing his bride along

for moral support. Greg's previous appearance, at the '94 Bash in Detroit, had received mixed reviews — but this time, he acquitted himself with distinction. (Then again, so did O.J. Simpson!)

Earlier in the day, the NLG symposium proved to be one of the liveliest ever held. The theme was "The Future of the Numismatic Literary Marketplace," and moderator Scott Travers assembled a panel of speakers that brought not only diversity to the program but also a wealth of information and insight.

The speakers included Dave Alexander, Dave Bowers, Margo Russell and two newcomers to the NLG scene: Eric Li Cheung, who dazzled the gathering with his polished presentation, and Tim Kochuba of Random House, the large New York publishing firm, who brought exciting news of his company's plans for ventures in the numismatic field. Among other things, the panelists offered a preview of how the Computer Age and the Information Superhighway may influence the coin-writing field of tomorrow.

The ANA election results, announced on the eve of the convention, seemed to suggest that NLG membership is a very strong asset for those seeking office in the national coin club. It was a foregone conclusion that the two top spots would be filled by Guild

members, since two longtime NLG members and former directors, Ken Bressett and Anthony Swiatek, were running unopposed for president and vice president, respectively. But five of the other seven seats also were captured by NLG members: Helen Carmody, Kay Lenker, Scott Travers, John Wilson and J.T. Stanton. The Guild's congratulations go to all of them — and now we'll have to work on signing up the two remaining governors, Gary Lewis and Will Rossman!

Kay Lenker gave Bash-goers an excellent demonstration of political savvy when she stood up to present her treasurer's report. "We're in the black," she announced, and then sat down! Modesty may have kept her from saying so herself, but I would like to emphasize that Kay has been one of the big reasons for the continued success — and solvency — of the Guild. She guards our bank books like a vigilant mother hen. And when we encountered cash-flow problems during our silver anniversary celebration, she gave us an interest-free loan to help us over the bump. If we ever saw fit to establish a Most Valuable Person award, Kay would be among the top contenders!

Speaking of our silver anniversary, we still have a few examples of the one-ounce, .999-fine silver medal we commissioned at that time to mark the occasion. The price is \$25 postpaid. As a bonus, anyone

ordering the medal will receive, at no additional cost, a copy of "NLG: A 25-Year History," the 50-page booklet written by David Alexander. The booklet can be purchased separately for \$5 postpaid. Orders should be sent to Ed Reiter, 12 Abbington Ter., Glen Rock, N.J. 07452. For medal orders going to overseas addresses, there is an added charge of \$2.50 per order for postage.

Also, we are now offering a Life Membership category. The fee is \$250, and this covers not only the membership itself but also a silver anniversary medal, an NLG history booklet and a highly attractive certificate suitable for framing and display. A complete list of life members will be published in the next NLG Newsletter. To apply, write to me at the address given previously or call me at (201) 612-0482.

The next newsletter also will contain complete rules for the 1996 NLG Writers' Competition. It's not too soon to start planning for the contest, so begin going through the materials you've had published since May 1, 1995, and getting copies ready for submission.

The contest, like the 1996 baseball season, is just around the corner. I'll see you on Opening Day!



MARTIN'S MUTTERINGS

By Lee Martin

Some hobbyists remember the glory days of philately and its wedding to numismatics when coins and stamps were united in a package titled PNC. Time and tide may not wait for anyone, but the glue known as "hobby involvement" still exists and may be expanding but in another form.

If you have been following ads, it is impossible to skip over a field that has existed for as long as celebrities have, and yet is still in its infancy ... as far as the numismatic arena is concerned. The fascinating collection of autographs is the anchor in a field that I currently enjoy; it does not mean that numismatics has dropped to second place in my collecting.

The inspiration to collect autographs was born when I noticed that a plaque I received was signed by many of my Numismatic Literary Guild friends. Some of them have moved on to the world of immortals. Those member signatures bring back wonderful memories of yesteryear.

Those who remain active in the coin field are recognized as stalwarts anchoring research and adding to the luster of the Guild while enshrining themselves in numismatic lore. If all that sounds like much ado about something, it is accurate. Having a signature of today's coin greats is a satisfying feel-

ing that I intend to continue as long as possible. (Being 78 years of age and with a ticker that is erratic in its non-musical beat, I'm uncertain what "possible" is, but I looked forward to the Anaheim convention and I suspect a few of you may have been surprised when I asked you for your autograph.)

Among the names in my numismatic autograph collection are Maurice Gould, Gordon Greene, Byron Johnson, Abe Kosoff, Faye Rochette, Virginia Culver, Eva Adams, Dick Yeoman, Thomas

Haney, Mort Reed and a few names written in pencil decades ago that have faded and are impossible to read. Many others who are semi-retired or inactive in the coin field were kind enough to join my signature roster, while the majority of autographers remain very active and form a map of happy reflections for me.

How valuable are the names in my collection on the commercial marketplace is unanswerable, but for me the autographs are priceless.

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vorzuglichkeit



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One related area that could use an infusion of new talent is auction cataloging. While numismatic retail is still feeling the after-effects of 1990, all major auction firms are finding it almost impossible to recruit qualified, willing and able catalogers.

The new NLG constitution of 1984 invited catalogers whose work showed significant research to our ranks. Unfortunately, there have been few newcomers to the cataloging profession since then, barring a couple who have been chained not to their desks but to more solid parts of public carceries.

We hope the holidays have been enjoyable and the preceding year's labors productive and profitable to all in NLG.

ALEXANDER NAMED NUMISMATIC AMBASSADOR

The NLG Bash always offers startlements and surprises, but few in his experience can compare to the visible (though pleasant) shock registered by past Executive Director David T. Alexander at the 1995 Anaheim event.

This was the totally unexpected surprise that followed Krause Publications' President Clifford Mishler's taking of the microphone to announce a special presentation. His lead-in

was an exercise in carefully prepared suspense, but after noting that the recipient was a past president of the Shelby County Coin Club and once taught a consumer protection coin collecting course at Miami-Dade Community College, the secret was out.

The latest recipient of the 21-year-old series of Ambassador awards was 21-year NLG member and veteran numismatic writer David T. Alexander. The first winner, as revealed in Krause's Ambassador album, was Southern California numismatic leader Charles G. Colver early in 1974. Since that date, scores of others with a demonstrated record of hard work for the hobby have been so honored.

The roster of Ambassadors is distinguished not only for its scope but for the wonderful spectrum represented by its recipients. Not only have American Numismatic Association officers and convention chairpersons, noted writers and professional numismatists such as Glenn B. Smedley, Kay Lenker, Lee F. Hewitt and Abe Kosoff received the award, but so have dedicated collectors and club leaders in more local venues.

Many of these would be unknown outside their immediate locales, but all have been individuals whose efforts advanced numismatics in their state or region. These are the often unsung heroes in the

front lines who had little chance of national recognition before the Ambassador program began.

In his acceptance, Alexander gave high praise to the professionalism of the award, noting that he was long identified with a numismatic publisher "which had often faced Krause from the other side of the trenches." He concluded with the assertion that "numismatics is one. It is a richly human pursuit, dedicated to knowledge and understanding of human history and human relationships. Our differences are temporary and fleeting. Our real unity in numismatics is the thing to remember."

BIOGRAPHY OF BETH DEISHER

Beth Deisher is editor of Coin World, the world's largest weekly publication in the field of collectible rare coins, bullion coins, medals, tokens and paper money.

She joined the publication as news editor in 1981 and became executive editor in 1984. In 1985, as Coin World prepared to enter its 25th year of publication, she was named editor.

In April 1988, Deisher was one of six witnesses invited to testify before the U.S. Senate Banking Committee, where she called for new designs for the nation's circulating coins. In

In 1992, the Senate Banking Committee again sought her testimony in considering President Bush's nominee for Mint director. She has also represented the hobby at three hearings in testimony before the House Banking Committee's Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs and Coinage as Congress considered various commemorative coin proposals. In July 1995, she was the lead witness calling for major changes to the U.S. commemorative coin program before the House Banking Subcommittee on Domestic and International Monetary Policy.

Among the innovations she helped to pioneer at Coin World is the publication's Trends Index charts, which in a glance allow one to follow price trend performance over time. Based on more than 22,000 Trends values for coins regularly reported in Coin World, the Index charts provide a comprehensive look at the collector coin market today. The Index charts are just one of the exciting features incorporated in the "Coin World Guide to Price and Value Trends of U.S. Coins," which in its first edition in 1989 captured the Numismatic Literary Guild's Book of the Year Award. Deisher served as copy editor for the first and subsequent annual editions.

Deisher was also editor of the 4th and 5th editions of the "Coin World Almanac," and supervised updates of "Coin Collecting Made Easy, Basic

Knowledge for the Coin Collector and Investor," the 1988 publication of the "Collector's Log of U.S. Coins," a record keeper and checklist for organizing one's collection by denomination and type, and "Collecting Money," a guidebook for beginning collectors. During her tenure, there also appeared the first two editions of the "Coin World Comprehensive Catalog and Encyclopedia of United States Coins," edited by NLG members David T. Alexander, Thomas K. DeLorey and Brad Reed.

A graduate of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Deisher is the recipient of more than 95 state and national awards for writing, editing and publication design. She began her journalistic career as a feature writer with the Norfolk, Va., Ledger Star. During her first stint in

specialized journalism, Deisher was editor of the Virginia Education Association's tabloid newspaper and was feature editor of the Virginia Journal of Education.

In 1968, Deisher spent six months as International Four H Youth Exchange delegate to Iran and was the first American girl to live and work in the villages of Iran under the auspices of the cultural exchange program.

In 1988, Deisher was named Ohio Professional Writers' Woman of Achievement. In 1990, she was elected a Fellow of the American Numismatic Society. In 1994, the Indian Lake (Ohio) School District presented her its Distinguished Service Award for her work and leadership in improving public education in the local school district in which she and her family reside.



Eric Li Cheung, the Guild's youngest member, receiving a presentation from Lee Martin, one of the oldest, at the 1995 Bash.

1995 NLG Awards

Following is a complete list of winners in the 1995 Numismatic Literary Guild Writers' Competition. Congratulations to one and all!

CLASS I BOOKS

1. BOOK OF THE YEAR

The work having the greatest potential impact on numismatics:

"World War II Remembered," by C. Frederick Schwan and Joseph E. Boling

2. BEST SPECIALIZED BOOK

(a) United States Coins: **"United States Patterns and Related Issues,"** by Andrew W. Pollock III

(b) World Coins: **"Standard Catalog of German Coins,"** compiled by N. Douglas Nicol; edited by Marian S. Moe and Fred J. Borgmann; Colin R. Bruce II, senior editor

(c) U.S. Paper Money: **"Standard Guide to Small-Size U.S. Paper Money,"** by Dean Oakes and John Schwartz

(d) World Paper Money: **"World War II Remembered,"** by C. Frederick Schwan and Joseph E. Boling

(e) Tokens & Medals: **"Standard Catalog of United States Tokens - 1700-1900,"** by Russell Rulau

(f) Numismatic Investments: **"The Coin Collector's Survival Manual,"** Third Edition by Scott A. Travers

(g) Museum & Exhibition Catalogs: *No entries*

CLASS II-A U.S. COMMERCIAL NUMISMATIC MAGAZINES

3. BEST ARTICLE OR SERIES OF ARTICLES

(a) Kari Stone, "1995 Cent

Treasure Hunt," **COINage**
(b) Tokens & Medals: R.W. Julian, "Indian Peace Medals," **COINage**

(c) Paper Money: Ed Rochette, "The BEP's Lost Press," **Coins Magazine**

4. **BEST COLUMN**
"My Two Cents' Worth," Ed Reiter, **COINage**

5. **BEST ISSUE**
COINage, July 1994, 30th Anniversary Issue, James L. Miller, Publisher

CLASS II-B WORLD COMMERCIAL NUMISMATIC MAGAZINES

6. BEST ARTICLE OR SERIES OF ARTICLES

(a) Coins: David S. North, "Coin Programs Earn Little for Small Nations," **World Coin News**

(b) Tokens & Medals: Virginia M. Da Costa, "Italian Renaissance Portrait Medals," **The Celator**

(c) Paper Money: Dr. Kerry Rodgers, "New Zealand Canteen Coupons," **Australian Coin Review**

7. **BEST COLUMN**
"Through the Looking Glass," David L. Vagi, **The Celator**

8. **BEST ISSUE**
World Coin News, New York International Edition, David C. Harper, Editor

CLASS III NON-PROFIT OR CLUB NUMISMATIC MAGAZINES- NATIONAL CLUB PUBLICATIONS

9. **BEST ARTICLE**
Ore H. Vacketta, "Centennial Commemoratives of Illinois," **TAMS Journal**

10. **BEST COLUMN**
"Auction Insights," Bob Merrill, **The Numismatist**

11. **BEST ISSUE**
The Commemorative Trail,

Winter-Spring 1995, Helen L. Carmody, Editor

REGIONAL CLUB PUBLICATIONS

9. BEST ARTICLE

William A. Burd, "The Chicago Connection," **Chicago Coin Club Chatter**

10. BEST COLUMN

"From Your Editor," Gayle K. Pike, **Tenn Coin News**

11. BEST ISSUE

Tenn Coin News, Summer 1994, Gayle K. Pike, Editor

CLASS IV NUMISMATIC NEWSPAPERS

12. **BEST SPOT NEWS STORY OR CONTINUING COVERAGE OF DEVELOPING STORY IN NUMISMATICS**
William T. Gibbs, "The 1995 Lincoln Doubled-Die Cent," **Coin World**

13. BEST ARTICLE OR SERIES OF ARTICLES

(a) Coins: Burnett Anderson, "Living Person Proposed for Coin Design," **Numismatic News**

(b) Tokens & Medals: William B. Murray, "Scrip Convenient Money Alternative," **Coin World**

(c) Paper Money: Jack H. Fisher, "City of Monuments," **Bank Note Reporter**

14. BEST COLUMN

Joys of Collecting," Q. David Bowers, **Coin World**

15. BEST ISSUE

Numismatic News, Oct. 4, 1994

CLASS V NON-NUMISMATIC NEWSPAPERS

16. THE MAURICE M. GOULD MEMORIAL AWARD

No entries

CLASS VI
AUCTION CATALOGS

17. **BEST AUCTION CATALOG**
Bowers and Merena,
"The Armand Champa
Library, Part I"

CLASS VII
COMMERCIAL PUBLICATIONS

18. **LEE MARTIN FOUNDER'S
AWARD** for Best Investment
Newsletter:
Maurice H. Rosen, *The Rosen
Numismatic Advisory*
19. **BEST DEALER-PUBLISHED
MAGAZINE OR NEWSPAPER**
Rare Coin Review 100th
Issue, Bowers and Merena
Galleries

CLASS VIII
ALL-AROUND PORTFOLIO

20. **Best All-Around Portfolio:**
Numismatic Guaranty
Corporation of America,
"Photo Proof"

CLASS IX
THE NLG NEWSLETTER

21. **Best Writer in the NLG
Newsletter:**
Peter Mosiondz Jr

CLASS X
AUDIO-VISUAL

22. **RADIO: Best Radio Series:**
"Money Talks," American
Numismatic Association,
James Taylor, Producer
23. **AUDIO: Best Audio Program
on Numismatics:** Michael
Fuljenz
24. **TELEVISION: Best Television
Report on Numismatics:** TV
News 12, New York; Anthony
Swiatek, Guest
25. **VIDEO: Best Video
Presentation:** "Peace 2000,"
Kenneth E. Bressett, Author;
David Lisot, Producer

CLASS XI
**CLEMENT F. BAILEY
MEMORIAL AWARD**

26. **CLEMENT F. BAILEY
MEMORIAL AWARD** for
Best New Writer: Kimberly
Pichler, Krause Publications

**EXTRAORDINARY MERIT
AWARDS**

"Bell's Unofficial Farthings,"
a book by R.C. Bell

"Flying Eagle and Indian Cent
Varieties," a book by Larry R.
Steve and Kevin J. Flynn

James C. Spilman, for long
and distinguished work as
editor of *The Colonial
Newsletter*

Stack's, for "The James A.
Stack Collection" auction
catalog

Raymond H. Williamson, for
"Lynchburg City Paper
Money of 1862," an article in
Lynch's Ferry magazine

ROLL OF HONOR
CLEMY AWARD WINNERS
1968-1995

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Clement F. Bailey
Edward C. Rochette
Lee Martin
Margo Russell
Virginia Culver
Maurice M. Gould
Eva B. Adams
Ray Byrne
Chester L. Krause
Richard S. Yeoman
Lee F. Hewitt
Abe Kosoff
Glenn Smedley
Arlie Slabaugh
Eric P. Newman
Kenneth Bressett
Donn Pearlman
Walter Breen
Ed Reiter
David Alexander
James L. Miller
Q. David Bowers
David L. Ganz
Clifford Mishler
R.W. Julian
Russell Rulau
Elvira Clain-Stefanelli
Beth Deisher



*Beth Deisher, left, receiving the 1995 Clemy Award from
Margo Russell.*

THE GUILD IS ON THE GROW!

The more, the merrier.

That's our attitude here at NLG Central — and there's much cause for merriment these days, for we've welcomed seven more members since the publication of our last Newsletter. Many of these newcomers received their official welcome during our Bash at the ANA convention in Anaheim. Some of them, in fact, signed up at the convention.

Without further ado, here are our newest colleagues:

Mark A. Benvenuto of Royal Oak, Mich., an assistant professor of chemistry at the University of Detroit Mercy who has written numerous articles for Coins Magazine and The Numismatist. Sponsored by Ed Reiter.

Rachel Shimona Feller of Robins, Iowa, whose work is familiar to readers of the IBNS Journal, official publication of the International Bank Note Society. Sponsored by Fred Schwan, David T. Alexander and Steve Feller.

Michael S. Fey, Ph.D., of Morris Plains, N.J., a contributor to Coin World, Numismatic News and the SSDC Journal and co-author (with Jeff Oxman) of a book now in preparation titled "Top 100 Morgan Dollar Varieties: The VAM Keys." Sponsored by Ed Reiter.

Robert S. Koppelman of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., editorial coordinator of the Photo Proof program for the Numismatic Guaranty Corporation of America Inc. (NGC). Sponsored by David T. Alexander and Ed Reiter.

Gail Kraljevich of Malvern, Pa., mother of NLG member John Kraljevich and a numismatic author in her own right whose work has appeared in Bo Tales, a publication for specialists in hobo nickels. Sponsored by Col. Bill Murray.

Dennis G. Rainey of Long Beach, Calif., a writer whose work is well known to readers of World Coin News. Sponsored by David T. Alexander.

Greg D. Ruby of Hampstead, Md., a contributor to Numismatic News, The TAMS Journal, the CONE Errorgram, The MANA Journal and The Maryland Numismatist, and editor of a book titled "Seafood & Canning Tokens of Dorchester County, Md." Sponsored by Ed Reiter.

CANDOR OR DISCOURTESY? AN UNHAPPY TREND IN CLUB PUBLICATIONS

By David T. Alexander, NLG

A recent trend in the world of numismatic writing is causing uneasiness for many NLG members and general readers.

This is the growing tendency to use club publications as forums from which to attack other organizations, to verbally assail other writers and their published work and to denigrate auction firms and their catalogs under the unconvincing plea of "constructive" criticism.

There is, of course, nothing new under the sun in numismatics as in other studies. In the last century, our field was enlivened by heated exchanges between leading numismatists of the day in house organs and auction catalogs. Dealers such as Ed. Frossard, J.W. Scott, W. Eliot Woodward and Lyman Low slugged it out in print and once with actual fists, as numismatic researcher Carl W.A. Carlson recorded in The Numismatist.

Early in this century, New York's irascible Thomas L. Elder was famed for verbal and written opinions that are remembered even today. As NLG member Thomas K. DeLorey noted in his award-winning study of Elder's tokens and medals, the New York dealer was known to verbally assault auction-goers before crowds of bidders.

As I noted in my recent article in the Numismatic Bibliomania Society's journal, The Asylum, Elder's mastery of "buncombe and invective" in letters and brochures peaked in the savage 1909 ANA presidential election. In his passionate advocacy of

Frank C. Higgins, Elder directed cataracts of abuse toward Farran Zerbe, the handler of Ohio candidate Dr. J.M. Henderson. Zerbe returned fire vigorously through totally partisan use of the pages of The Numismatist.

It took years for the hatreds aroused in that epic campaign to subside. No positive benefit to the ANA, Elder, Zerbe, Higgins or Henderson gained from the whole hysterical interlude can be identified.

NLG has felt occasional waves of controversy itself. The Guild has tried to avoid controversy since its founding in 1968, when it was decided not to issue membership numbers and the disagreeable "membership number elitism" that was the bane of other

groups. NLG saw little value in elitism then and sees less today and opted to simply ignore membership numbers.

In 1979, a bucolic Wisconsin auctioneer attempted to create a competing numismatic writers' group, using a good deal of anti - NLG rhetoric to launch what proved to be a nonstarter. At other times, attempts have been made to entangle the Guild in internal struggles raging in other organizations.

During my term as Executive Director, I deflected attempts to extend feuds in the error coin area into NLG. The thorny thicket of early copper also offered challenges to patience and forbearance. In 1986, we received one of the late Roger S. Cohen's most outstanding hate letters after NLG gave its

Book of the Year award to the late Walter Breen's "Encyclopedia of United States Half Cents."

Cohen will be long remembered as a spirited writer of such bilious prose, evidently relieving some need in an embittered psyche. In NLG's case, his four-page communique ended, "I am Sir, your most humble and obedient servant."

Recalling that this was the favored close on dueling challenges, I wrote back, accepting the challenge and exercising my right to choose weapons and place of combat. I informed Cohen that we would meet on the roof of the Milwaukee ANA convention hotel and belabor each other at point-blank range with copies

Cont. on page 12

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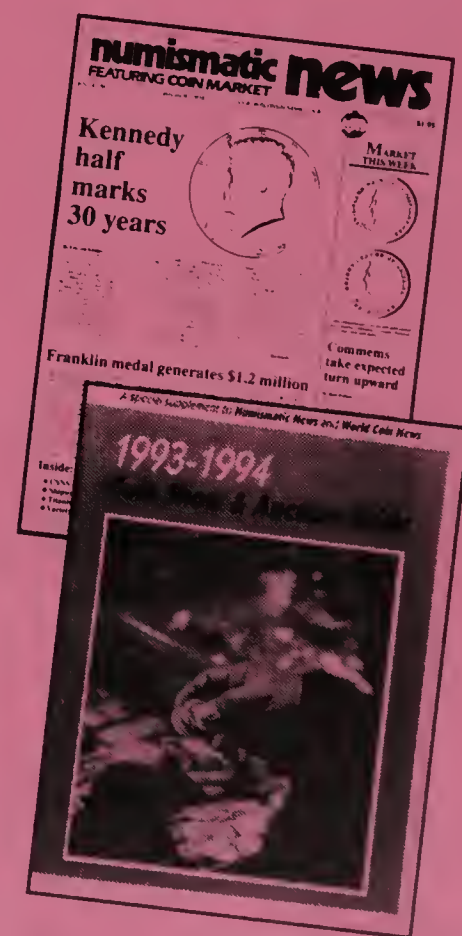
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of the heavy Breen Encyclopedia... while standing in 10 feet of water in the hotel swimming pool! To paraphrase the old saw, "A humorous word turneth away wrath."

Breen himself contributed to this climate of negativism with his increasingly vituperative attacks on his deceased mentor, Dr. William H. Sheldon. The Early American Coppers journal, Penny Wise, published not only his anti-Sheldon diatribes, but anti-Breen counterattacks that echoed eerily in the dark finale of his often controversial career. What good all this did for the reputations of Breen and Sheldon or for the world of early copper is the subject of wry speculation today.

NLG itself was the object of several gratuitous attacks in the pages of The Asylum not long ago. As a charter member of the Numismatic Bibliomania Society, I objected to these Shakespearean asides or "noises off," and a few disjointed fragments of my letter actually saw print. NLG advocate Margo Russell's letter was treated more professionally. Present Asylum editor Martin Gengerke plans to direct the publication along more mature lines, and we wish him every success.

For more than 30 years, James Spilman has directed The Colonial Newsletter as an exemplary labor of love, plowing the fallow field of U.S. Colonial numismatics. NLG was proud to tender to him an

Award of Extraordinary Merit last year.

A new publication in that field, however, showed the dark side of elitism with its ceaseless barrage of negativism against other researchers, catalogers and dealers who have had the temerity to involve themselves with the Colonial field. Although the reviews occasionally included a playful slap on the wrist to the reviewer himself, the general trend was sufficiently negative to attract spirited responses, including one especially violent op-ed piece in Coin World.

Some targets of these critiques simply shook their heads in disbelief, a few influential feathers were ruffled and not impossibly some harm was done to two or three auction firms. All of the facts concerning the cataloging under review were not revealed, and the positive value of such criticism can only be called dubious.

Whether the steady drumbeat of such criticism is genuinely based on a sincere desire to create a better numismatic world, or to boost one writer-researcher's reputation at the expense of others living or recently deceased, the question must again be asked: Does such continued sniping achieve any real good for the closely linked fields of numismatic research, writing and auction cataloging? Regrettably, the answer must be NO!

NLG PRESENTATION - CLEMY AWARD

By Elvira Clain-Stefanelli

Gentlemen and ladies - dear colleagues and sisters and brothers of the same guild:

I feel indeed, even in absentia, very uneasy to interrupt this evening's bantering and laughter. First, let me say that my last summer's great surprise and reward was receiving the highly prized CLEMY award, which I exhibit with pride in my office.

Also, let me say that funny things can indeed happen on the way to the "Forum"- or as in this case, the ANA! It is almost as if the angels of numismatics did not want you to hear my thoughts and praises for the 1995 recipient of the Cley Award.

Within one week I was faced with two challenges that took me away from my beloved world of numismatics. One was an eye operation which was followed within 24 hours by a broken leg and hip. Thank God for 911!

Throughout my stay in the hospital and the therapy at home, my one objective was to come to the ANA and especially to this evening's roast and presentations. BUT, the good Lord saw fit to engulf our land with fiery heat and I was forced, unwillingly, to change my plans.

I want to thank my dear

friend, Margo Russell, also a CLEMY Award honoree, for delivering my words to you. I did discover that neither the ANA nor the NLG have the necessary funds to set up a closed-circuit televideo of my presentation.

Numismatics, as a hobby, is often considered a fun game and avocation, but it can also be a very serious and weighty science, especially when we think of the tens of thousands of books, let alone the millions of articles and pamphlets and periodicals that have been and are being published. (Believe me, I know ...) These mountains of erudition were not only the result of the hunger for knowledge for hundreds of generations of numismatists, but also of the identifying and the pride of possession: the unique coin, the rarest of the rare, the king (queen) of coins, the "perfect" coin - further superlatives escape me.

I do apologize if I may appear to point my finger at every person in this room, but realistically to search, to seek, to find and then, somehow, to possess our numismatic dream is what draws all of us to this and many similar numismatic gatherings.

And now may I finally approach the subject of my presentation of this evening.

Yes - collecting - this is the leitmotif of all our ambitions in this hobby. However, the complexities of our daily lives

have, unfortunately, also invaded our hobby, numismatics. Collecting has become a hazardous undertaking, where we seem to constantly encounter dangerous bridges and passes to cross which challenge our pursuit of numismatic happiness. Yes, we require indeed a guarding and guiding angel to point out to us the path - not to salvation, but to possession of light and nebulous cloud over our numismatic landscape. We get the benefit of knowledge, experience and guidance from them - they do for us what we cannot do for ourselves: the channeling of the vast "information highway" of numismatics on a weekly basis.

I think I have been leading you on the right track. Yes, we have to search here the numismatic horizon for the 1995 CLEMY awardee.

My work in this selecting process was truly difficult. I only wish that the founding fathers of this award had established at least five CLEMYs, then perhaps I could have had fewer sleepless nights. There are so many people in the field of numismatics who merit this award.

Ultimately, I found out that the pass was clear and that the choice was even clearer to me. That person, who up to this point remains anonymous, has already been distinguished with several awards and I feel happy and serene as nobody could accuse me of selecting an

unworthy person nor a wallflower.

And here is the 1995 CLEMY Award winner: Elizabeth a.k.a. "Beth" Deisher from Numismatic (oops) no, I mean Coin World. But, before we place the award in her hands - actually, exactly where is she going to find the place for it? - I have to add a few more words and try to explain why she does have such an attraction for awards.

Starting in the fifth grade, Beth already showed a precocious inclination for news reporting, and by the time she graduated from the University of North Carolina Greensboro she knew exactly where her calling was. This placid young journalist felt her wings growing and with a camera in her hand she looked for new and foreign lands. But, unlike other journalists, she did not seek Gay Paree, London, or even Egypt - no, she went to Iran, where according to her, she "had a wonderful time." Upon return, for almost eight years she worked for the Norfolk, Virginia, Ledger-Star and the Virginia Education Association.

After this, Beth continued her systematically planned career. First, she married and then deserted the "South" (you know how Southerners feel about this) for the Midwest.

By 1977, we find her in Sidney, Ohio as the news editor of the Sidney Daily News. It

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was only in 1981 that she entered the hallowed and sacred grounds of numismatics when she became the news editor of Coin World. There she came under the wing of Margo Russell, whom she succeeded in 1985 as Editor of Coin World. From then on Beth became a household name involved in many numismatic debates and projects. The calmer waters of the 1970's and early 1980's in the numismatic field had changed - even the "beltway crowd" wondered if some changes might not be necessary. This was the atmosphere Beth likes - her trips and certainly her telephone calls to Washington increased.

I need not enumerate her numerous activities - they are well known to us, but, within our circle what is less known is

the appreciation bestowed on her by her journalistic peers.

The last seven years, as far as I could count, Beth has been bestowed numerous first-place awards by the Ohio Professional Writers Committee. The Numismatic Literary Guild awarded her four awards for Best Newspaper Issue -1991 & 1994; Best Opinion Column in 1991; and Best Spot News Series in 1984. The Society of Philatelists and Numismatists named her "Woman of the Year" in 1986.

It is truly fitting, therefore, that this year's Clemy Award winner be Beth Deisher - but one moment - even though my decision was based on her past accomplishments, I also had an eye on the future. We are fortunate indeed that Beth has a long career ahead of

her with plenty of numismatic headaches which will need a good newspaper person to bring them to the attention of the public, especially the collector.

In summing up: Beth takes her duties seriously. She is a diligent researcher, and honest interpreter of news. But, we best know her as a determined fighter for what she considers her mission: to serve the collector as best as she knows. People might agree or disagree with her views, but we all have to respect her straightforward approach and her undaunted courage, in the best journalistic sense, to say what she believes.

I wish I could be here to personally present this award. I can't be and the time has finally come for the presentation.

We thank the members of NLG whose articles have enriched COINage magazine since 1964.

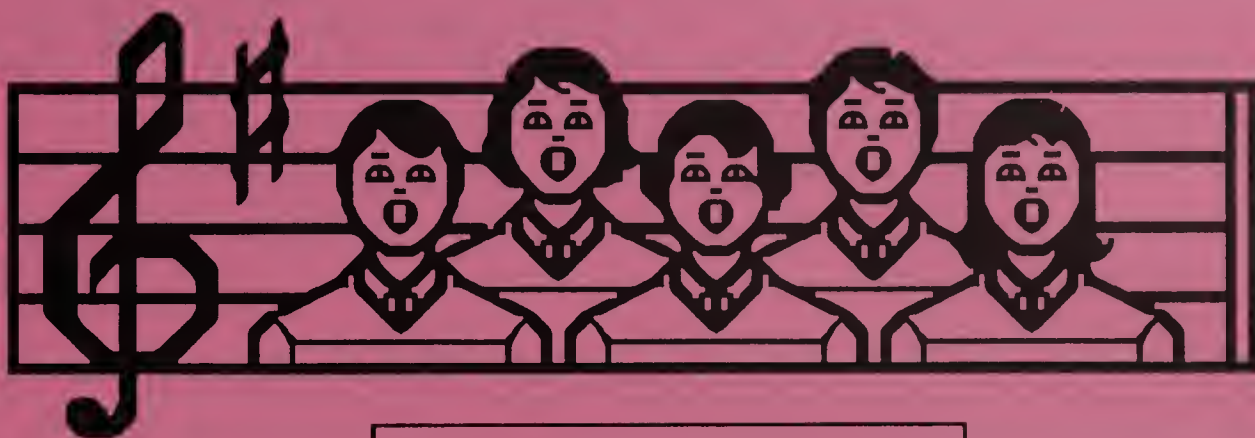
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ACHIEVING PARROT-Y: PART 6

By Ed Reiter



Imitation, they say, is the sincerest form of flattery.

Apparently, they're right — for I was sincerely flattered at the NLG's latest Bash when longtime Guild member, officer and hard-working volunteer Tom DeLorey rose to deliver a wry song parody he had prepared. Tom, you see, was "inspired" by observing my own Bash parodies over the previous decade.

I'm not sure that Tom was wise in his choice of role models, but I heartily applaud his aplomb in undertaking this daunting task. I was so impressed, in fact, that I felt the current installment of "Achieving Parody" — the ongoing series of Newsletter articles chronicling these parodies — should feature Tom's song, rather than another of my own. Of course, this also has the advantage of stretching out the series!

To underscore the fact that this is a guest appearance, however, I've decided to modify the title of this installment.

TAX ALL THE MERCHANDISE

T-a-a-a-a-x all the merchandise.
Tax Girl Scout cookie sales,
Posters saving whales.
Tax David Ganz's legal fees
And Morgans by the pails.
You tax us so much.

T-a-a-a-a-x all the property.
Tax water and tax air,
Heidi's derriere.
Florence Schook's expense account,
Including first-class fare.
You tax us so much.

Many a dealer you've busted
Whose 1040s you've readjusted.
Oh, well, only God can be trusted
And your design
Is not divine.

So t-a-a-a-a-x all our merchandise,
The classic coins and fads,
Rarities and clads.
And when you hit rock bottom,
Slap a tax on
Coin World's ads.

Your tax is TOO much!

Instead of "Achieving Parody," I'm calling it "Achieving Parrot-y." This also is intended to suggest — but not put down — the fact that Tom was imitating my shtick. Much to the relief of many readers, I'm sure, I'll refrain from reprising one of my own parodies in this issue.

For those of you who missed Tom's performance at the Anaheim convention, the objects of his infection ... excuse me, affection ... were the diligent California tax authorities who relentlessly insisted on collecting state sales tax on all coin transactions at the convention. Their devotion to duty was so overwhelming that it also taxed the patience of just about everyone at the show.

Tom set his parody to Bob Hope's familiar theme song, "Thanks for the Memory" — which, I'm pleased to note, made its debut in the very same year I did: 1938.

Without further ado, here is Tom DeLorey's achievement in parrot-y.

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